

CHAPTER 3: SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING DATA

As described in Chapter 2, by resolution on January 16, 2007, the Sandy Springs Mayor and City Council approved the submission of the Comprehensive Plan Community Assessment to the state of Georgia. The submission of this document to the state on February 16, 2007, represented the completion of Phase I of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The information included in this chapter represents important demographic, housing, economic development, transportation, recreation and parks and other data included in the Community Assessment that was important to consider as a foundation for the creation of the Community Agenda.

POPULATION

Projections of Population and Households

Total population includes household population and group quarters population. A household includes all the persons who occupy a housing unit. In Sandy Springs in 2000, the group quarters population was comprised of "noninstitutionalized population" (415 persons), nursing home residents (37), and other institutions (34 persons) and totaled only 486 persons.

"Growth is constrained by the amount of land, either vacant or redevelopable, for housing, public facilities, and other resources. Unless the local government expands its boundaries through annexation, shifts vacant land use allocation from one category to another, such as from industrial to residential, increases densities in its development regulations, or promotes redevelopment, population growth will begin to taper off."³

During the 2000s, as Sandy Springs has approached buildout of its vacant land, the pace of population increase through new residential land development has slowed considerably. Due in large part to the lack of developable land for new development, the pace of population increase will continue to slow down.

Population and household projections, shown in Table 3.1, are based on a forecast of housing units in the future – the projections of population assume a relatively modest increase of housing units during the planning horizon (to 2027). Also, between the years 2000 and 2027, it is assumed that 1,500 persons will be added to Sandy Springs' group quarters population, and that nursing homes will comprise the vast majority, if not all, of future group quarters populations.

The size of households is important in terms of forecasts and projections. The average household size in Sandy Springs in 2000 was 2.17 persons per unit. As noted in the Community Assessment Report, average household size in the U.S. has continued to decline over many decades, and additional decreases in overall household size are predicted in the U.S., at least until 2010, when average household size in the U.S. is anticipated to level off at approximately 2.5 persons per unit. The projections for Sandy Springs assume a consistent average household size of 2.17 persons.

³ Meck, Stuart, 2006. "Projections and Demand Models." Page 504 in *Planning and Urban Design Standards*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Another variable that is extremely important to critically review in projecting population is the total occupancy of housing units. At any given time, some of the housing units in Sandy Springs will be vacant for one reason or another. A five to ten percent vacancy rate, at any given point in time during the planning horizon, is a realistic assumption.⁴ Therefore, it is posited here that the projections based on 95 percent occupancy of housing units (Table 3.1) is the best projection of population for Sandy Springs to use in terms of general facility planning.

Table 3.1
Population and Household Projections, 2007-2027
City of Sandy Springs
(95% Occupancy of Housing Units)

City of Sandy Springs	2007	2010	2012	2017	2022	2027
Households (@ 95% housing units)	42,445	42,572	43,079	43,701	44,344	44,978
Household Population (@ 95%)	92,106	92,382	93,481	94,831	96,227	97,602
Group Quarters Population	874	1,041	1,152	1,430	1,708	1,986
Total Population (@ 95%)	92,980	93,423	94,633	96,261	97,935	99,588

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. February 2007.

For purposes of planning a development impact fee program, however, since residential impact fees are charged on the basis of housing units (whether occupied or not), an assumption of 100% occupancy must be made in order to be consistent with acceptable impact fee methods. Table 3.2 provides household and population projections based on 100% occupancy of all projected housing units.

Table 3.2
Population and Household Projections, 2007-2027
City of Sandy Springs
(100% Occupancy of Housing Units)

City of Sandy Springs	2007	2010	2012	2017	2022	2027
Households (@ 100% housing units)	44,679	44,813	45,346	46,011	46,678	47,345
Household Population (@ 100%)	96,953	97,244	98,401	99,844	101,291	102,739
Group Quarters Population	874	1,041	1,152	1,430	1,708	1,986
Total Population (@ 100%)	97,827	98,285	99,553	101,274	102,999	104,725

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. February 2007.

Geographic Distribution

For purposes of instituting a stormwater utility in the future, the comprehensive planning work scope included a task of estimating housing units and population according to six creek watersheds in the city (see watersheds map on the following page). Table 3.3 provides a geographic allocation of the housing unit and population increases. An explanation as to why the six watersheds are expected to increase substantially, or only modestly, follows Table 3.3.

⁴ In the year 2000 in Sandy Springs, 8.2% of the housing units were vacant. Typically, multi-family units have higher vacancies (approximately 8%, sometimes more), while detached, single-family units can frequently have vacancy rates of only 2-3%. Given these facts, 5% vacancy for all units is assumed.

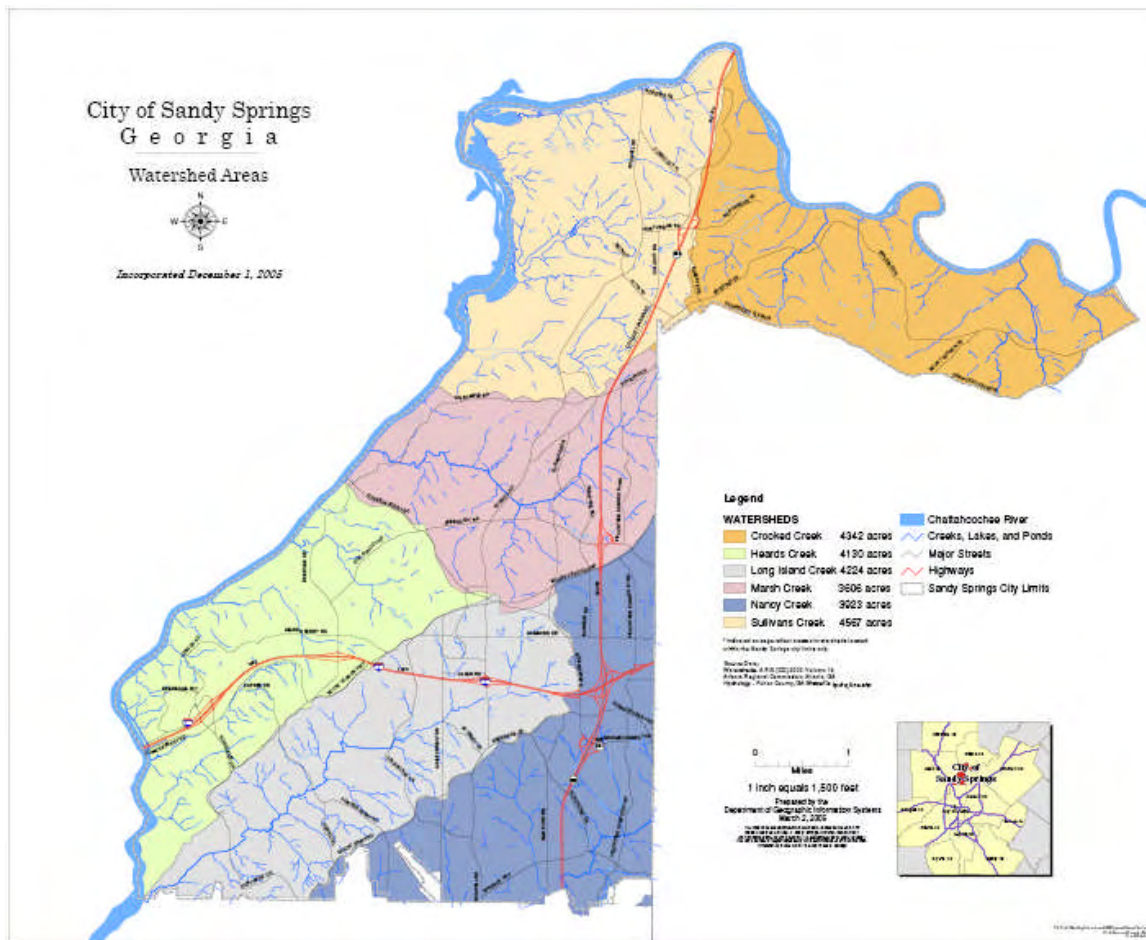


Table 3.3
Distribution of Net Housing Unit and Population Increases by Watershed
2007-2027 for City of Sandy Springs

Creek Watershed	2007 Housing Units	Net Housing Unit Increase, 2007-2027	Household Population Increase in New Housing Units	Net Group Quarters Increase, 2007-2027	Total (Household Plus Group Quarters) Population Increase 2007-2027
Nancy Creek	8,623	430	933	278	1,211
Long Island Creek	7,059	855	1,855	371	2,226
Heards Creek	2,993	115	250	37	287
Marsh Creek	8,891	858	1,862	204	2,066
Crooked Creek	3,441	111	241	37	278
Sullivans Creek	13,672	297	645	185	830
Total City	44,679	2,666	5,786	1,112	6,898

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. February 2007. Assumes 100% occupancy of housing units at 2.17 persons per unit.

Watershed Areas

Nancy Creek Watershed

The Nancy Creek watershed covers southeastern Sandy Springs east of Mt. Paran Road and Glenridge Drive. This area includes the Roswell Road corridor south of Glenridge Drive and it also includes the Georgia 400 corridor to Mt. Vernon Highway, south of Abernathy Road. It will receive a substantial share of the net housing unit and population increases in Sandy Springs during the 2007-2027 planning horizon.

Long Island Creek Watershed

The Long Island Creek watershed encompasses south central Sandy Springs, between Mt. Vernon Highway and Mt. Paran Road; it also includes a significant part of the Town Center redevelopment area, with the intersection of Interstate 285 and Roswell Road. The Long Island Creek watershed is forecast to receive the largest share of net gains in housing units and population of all six watersheds in the city, during the planning horizon.

Heards Creek Watershed

The Heards Creek watershed covers areas of Sandy Springs north and west of Mt. Vernon Highway. It includes the Powers Ferry/Northside Drive activity area at Interstate 285, but net gains in housing units and population are anticipated to be small when compared with other watersheds.

March Creek Watershed

Marsh Creek encompasses central Sandy Springs (northeast of Johnson Ferry Road and south of Dalrymple Road), and it includes the Roswell Road corridor and Georgia 400 north of Mt. Vernon Highway. The northern part of the Town Center redevelopment area of Sandy Springs lies within this watershed. Because of these factors, Marsh Creek is forecasted to receive a substantial share of net gains in housing units and population during the twenty-year planning horizon.

Crooked Creek Watershed

The Crooked Creek watershed, encompassing northeastern Sandy Springs between the Chattahoochee River and the DeKalb County line, will not witness a significant population increase.

Sullivans Creek Watershed

The Sullivans Creek watershed covers the northwest portion of Sandy Springs and includes the Roswell Road corridor; it will receive modest population increases.

Desired or Future Target Population

In a survey of Sandy Springs residents in February 2007, in response to the statement, "Sandy Springs should plan to accommodate a "desired" or "target" future population level," 132 of 183 respondents agreed. The survey results, however, do not indicate what such a desired target

population might be. Current conditions, such as traffic congestion and overcrowded schools, are two reasons why such support should be interpreted as establishing modest (rather than aggressive) target population levels.

The Sandy Springs Community Agenda does not set an overall target population; however, it should be noted that the net population increases projected in this chapter could be considered an amount that should not be exceeded during the planning horizon (to 2027) without an amendment to the comprehensive plan, given overcrowded schools and a road network that is operating beyond capacities in many places. The amount of population projected appears to be an informal, target population of sorts, since it is highly consistent with the City's vision. Some "protected neighborhoods" (see character areas) will receive almost negligible population increases, and the Roswell Road corridor will receive relatively minimal net increases in housing units and population, involving demolition and rebuilding through redevelopment.

Accommodating an Aging Population

Age is among the most important dimensions of the population when planning for the future. There can be vast differences in the needs of children versus the elderly. Age has a relationship to the labor force – workers include the population ages 16 years and over through retirement age and sometimes beyond. Age has important relationships to housing and can help predict likely first-time homebuyers, renters, owners of second homes, etc. The relationship of the age of population to the needs for community facilities and services is also very important. For instance, a high elderly population often translates into a need for health care, nursing and personal care homes, possible demand for continuing care retirement communities, and increased demand for senior centers. On the other hand, a city or county with a projected increase in children signals a need for schools, day care centers, and playgrounds.

Table 3.4 provides a projection of Sandy Springs' population in 2017 and 2027 by major age group. The projections for the year 2027 are based on an assumption that Sandy Springs' population by age follow the same age distribution as that projected for the state of Georgia as a whole in 2025. The projections for the year 2017 were estimated based on an age distribution somewhere about mid-point between the actual age distribution in Sandy Springs in 2000 and the projected 2025 age distribution for the state.

Table 3.4
Population Projection by Age Group, 2012 and 2027
City of Sandy Springs (95% Occupancy of Housing Units)

Age Group	Stage of Life	Persons in 2017	Percent of Total (%) in 2017	Persons in 2027	Percent of Total (%) in 2027
0-4	Pre-school	6,450	6.7%	7,569	7.6%
5-17	School Age	14,920	15.5%	18,424	18.5%
18-44	Family Forming	40,911	42.5%	35,752	35.9%
45-64	Peak Earning	21,659	22.5%	23,403	23.5%
65-84	Younger Seniors	10,685	11.1%	12,449	12.5%
85+	Older Senior	1,636	1.7%	1,991	2.0%
Total		96,261	100%	99,588	100%

Source: Derived based on Tables 1.13 and 1.14 of the Community Assessment Report, City of Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan (2007).

Due to migration in and out of the city, it is impossible to predict with certainty the future age composition of Sandy Springs' population. However, the projections in Table 3.4 appear to be reasonable in the prediction that the senior populations will increase in the future. There will be an overall reduction between 2017 and 2027 of the total number of "family forming" persons. Such a decrease might also be anticipated in Sandy Springs because of difficulties that first-time home buyers may experience in finding affordable housing.

Recognizing Diversity

The population in Sandy Springs has historically been quite homogenous (i.e., predominantly White). Relative to race, the American Community Survey for Sandy Springs shows as of the year 2005 that Black or African Americans comprise an estimated 19.9 percent of the total population, with Whites constituting 66.3 percent and other races 8.1 percent. These data show a substantial increase in the Black population, over those figures reported for the 2000 Census (12.0 percent Black and 77.5 percent White). Hence, Sandy Springs has witnessed some significant changes in terms of the diversity of its population.

Relative to origin, the 2005 estimates show that persons of Hispanic or Latino origin comprised 10.8 percent of the city's total population up from 10.0 percent in 2000). An increase in Spanish-speaking persons raises an issue for local governments—to what extent should people who don't speak English well be accommodated with regard to city services? This question was asked in a questionnaire in support of the comprehensive planning effort. Specifically, it asked, "Given an increasingly diverse population, including Hispanic and Latino populations, the City should assess the impact on how Sandy Springs provides and delivers services (e.g., bilingual police officers and clerks, publication of City newsletters in Spanish, etc.)." While slightly less than a majority of respondents (87 of 182, or 48 percent) agreed with the statement, a substantial number of persons (68) disagreed.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Projections of housing units have been prepared for planning purposes and are shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5
Housing Unit Projections, 2007-2027
City of Sandy Springs

City of Sandy Springs	2007	2010	2012	2017	2022	2027
Total Housing Units	44,679	44,813	45,346	46,011	46,678	47,345

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc. September 2006.

The comprehensive plan can influence the mix of housing types, by designating (or not designating) certain categories of residential land development, such as apartments, townhouses, starter housing, and mixed income developments.

The community survey conducted during visioning workshops and on the City's web page in February 2007 provide some insight into possible mixes of housing units types and then design regulations to pursue the target mix (138 of 172 in favor, Housing Question #1). A lot of possible debate could ensue as to what the proper mix should be, but the citizen survey results help illuminate existing conditions and desired housing policy for Sandy Springs.

Diversifying the Mix of Housing Types

As alluded to in the community assessment (phase 1 of the comprehensive plan) and made evident by citizen remarks during the planning process, Sandy Springs faces a paradox of extremes – protected neighborhoods that have mansions and houses above the median value for the region, and apartment complexes that serve the lowest-income residents of Sandy Springs. The housing stock is paradoxical in that, while Sandy Springs has *the* (if not one of the) highest median value of homes for any city in the state, a surprising majority of the city's housing stock in 2000 was renter occupied, and a substantial majority of all housing units in 2000 were apartments. The dichotomy and imbalance are captured in the following statement:

"The housing stock in Sandy Springs seems to be rather uneven compared to other similar areas of metro Atlanta -- there are a lot of lower-end apartments, a lot of high-end townhomes and detached homes, and not very much in the middle..."
– Sandy Springs Citizen, 2007

Fair-Share of Low-Income Apartments

Sandy Springs has received a substantial share of apartments in the region. The spatial geography of low cost housing is also important – nearly all of the lower-cost housing units are concentrated in the Roswell Road corridor, which is served by transit. Many residents believe that Sandy Springs has its fair share of low cost housing. Indeed, part of the impetus behind the incorporation of Sandy Springs was because of the zoning approvals for apartments in Sandy Springs by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners over the past three decades.

One must predict the market, or project/extrapolate what the market will provide in Sandy Springs in terms of housing types, before one can assess how to influence that mix. In terms of opportunities, Sandy Springs is witnessing a substantial renewal of its housing stock. Such trends include the demolition of older apartment complexes; the renovation of apartment complexes and continued use as apartments or their conversion to condominiums; replacement of older, smaller, detached single-family homes with larger (often giant or mansion) detached homes; and the addition of up-scale, fee-simple townhouses. More institutionalized-residential living housing options are also anticipated.

Another paradox with regard to the mix of housing types in Sandy Springs is that redevelopment, especially the mixed-use or mixed-income variety (see later discussion in this chapter), will tend to favor multi-family, higher density housing products, and therefore probably result in more apartments and condominiums, and a possible swing in that direction in terms of percentages of various housing types. Hence, some mixed-use redevelopments involving housing tend to be contrary to the desires of residents articulated above, relative to limits on apartments. In terms of housing tenure (renter versus owner), Sandy Springs would like to increase the percentage of homes that are owner occupied. That desire translates as more detached, single-family housing instead of attached, higher-density housing types. The desire for limits on apartments and other forms of attached housing may need to be moderated some considering the City's desire to promote mixed-use development, of which attached housing is often a major part.

Influencing What Will Happen: Accommodating Retirees

Sandy Springs needs to better anticipate and provide for an increasing senior population. Detached, single-family dwellings provide options for only those seniors who are still able to live independently or with family. This means that the existing detached single-family housing stock is largely unsuitable for most retirees, and other housing types need to be added to the mix in Sandy Springs. Those new types of housing can include a broad range of options, from continuing care retirement communities, to care facilities (nursing and personal care homes), to in-law suites in protected neighborhoods.

Table 3.6
Target Percentages for Housing Mix in 2027
City of Sandy Springs

Type of Unit	# Units, 2000 (Census)	%	Target % 2027	# Units 2027	Net Change Units 2000-2027
One Family, Detached	14,374	33.6%	40%	18,938	+4,564
One Family, Attached	2,881	6.7%	10%	4,734	+1,853
Multiple Family	25,466	59.6%	50%	23,673	-1,793
Mobile Home	23	0.1%	0%	0	-23
Total	42,744	100%	100%	47,345	4,601

Housing Affordability

The Community Assessment Report describes the challenges with regard to providing affordable housing in Sandy Springs. The median value of owner-occupied housing units in Sandy Springs in 2000 was \$316,600. As a basis of comparison, the median value of all owner-occupied housing units for Georgia's housing stock in 2000 was \$100,600, for Roswell's, \$204,700, and for Fulton County's, \$175,800. With such a high median housing value (and also high median gross rents in 2000) significant numbers of workers in some occupations (e.g., retail workers) probably cannot afford to live or rent in Sandy Springs.

In addition, the Sandy Springs interim comprehensive plan found that housing values have recently increased faster than incomes, and that much of the Fulton County's workforce doesn't live in Fulton County due to housing affordability issues. Recent studies by Georgia Tech and the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership (ANDP) show that the adequate supply of affordable rental units for extremely low-income households earning 30 percent and below the HUD Adjusted Median Family Income (HAMFI) is particularly acute. On average, there were approximately 4.2 extremely low-income households for every unit that is affordable. North Fulton and Sandy Springs, in particular, have a very short supply of low-cost units. The affordable housing issue affects not only low-income households, but professionals as well.

In another study⁵ by Georgia Tech planning students, affordable housing needs of job centers was conducted, including the "Central Perimeter Job Center" which includes Sandy Springs, the

⁵ "Fair Share Housing in the Atlanta Region," Georgia Tech City and Regional Planning Department, Fall Studio, 2003, Dr. David Sawicki, Instructor. Prepared for the Atlanta Neighborhood Development Partnership, Inc., and its ongoing Mixed Income Communities Initiative.

Perimeter Center and Dunwoody areas of DeKalb County, and a small part of Cobb County. That study found that there were significant deficiencies in affordable housing in this job center, which had a jobs-housing ratio of 2.35. Table 2.3 reiterates those deficiencies in the provision of affordable housing supply in the Central Perimeter area (mostly Sandy Springs but including other abutting areas).

Table 3.7
Affordable Housing Deficiencies (Units)
By Range of Household Income, 2003
Central Perimeter Job Center

Household Income	Affordable rent or House Payment (Monthly)	Existing Housing Units	Estimated Need	(Deficiency) or Surplus
Less than \$15,000	< \$300	264	2,269	(2,005)
\$15,000 - \$19,999	\$300-\$399	123	6,076	(5,953)
\$20,000 - \$24,999	\$400-\$499	310	11,107	(10,797)
\$25,000 - \$29,999	\$500-\$599	465	8,182	(7,717)
\$30,000 - \$34,999	\$600-\$799	4,538	3,754	784
\$35,000 - \$39,999	\$800-\$899	4,986	3,669	1,317
\$40,000 - \$49,999	\$900-\$999	4,324	10,680	(6,356)
\$50,000 - \$59,999	\$1,000-\$1,249	5,192	5,599	(407)
\$60,000 - \$74,999	\$1,250-\$1,499	2,468	5,741	(3,273)
\$75,000 or more	\$1,500 and up	17,389	5,250	12,139
Total		40,059	62,327	(22,268)

Source: "Fair Share Housing in the Atlanta Region," Georgia Tech City and Regional Planning Department Fall Studio, 2003, Dr. David Sawicki, Instructor, page IV-3-6.

The citizen survey revealed overwhelming support for the provision of affordable housing; 132 of 174 respondents indicated that the comprehensive plan should address affordable housing needs. However, caution is needed in interpreting these results. For instance, the question answered affirmatively by the citizens also indicated "including the needs of police officers, teachers, and other young professionals who would like to own homes in Sandy Springs but can only rent their homes or cannot afford to live in the city at all" (Question #2, Housing). Hence, the widespread support for affordable housing appears to be limited to professional households, city employees, and children of existing families who are priced out of the Sandy Springs housing market.

Furthermore, when considering citizen responses to the other questions about housing, it is clear that low-income housing is not desired by the respondents of the survey, and there is not sufficient support among the populace for widespread geographic implementation of a policy that encourages "mixed income" housing (see discussions below) or supports waivers of development impact fees for affordable housing developments.

The housing market in Sandy Springs works heavily against the provision of "starter housing," which can be defined as housing that is affordable for first-time homebuyers to own. Usually, the term "starter housing" refers to detached, single-family dwellings, though it is not necessarily limited in that respect. The results of market-provided housing in Sandy Springs are well understood – high-end houses will replace more obsolete ones, and the market will fail to provide affordable housing for households of all incomes.

Mixed-Income Housing

“Mixed-income housing” refers to housing for people with a broad range of incomes on the same site, development, or immediate neighborhood. In response to a question about mixed-income housing, Sandy Springs residents did not favor instituting such a policy – 59 agreed but 79 disagreed with the statement that “Sandy Springs should consider a policy of promoting housing for people with mixed incomes in the same development or neighborhood, as one opportunity for promoting more affordable housing in the city.”

The City’s interim comprehensive plan prepared and adopted prior to the survey results cited above, recommended consideration of the adoption of an inclusionary zoning ordinance (i.e., something similar to a mixed income housing policy). Absent clear support for mixed income housing in the survey results, however, the comprehensive plan limits the applicability of that tool (to living working areas) and considers other possible mechanisms for providing affordable housing.

Protecting Workforce Neighborhoods from Gentrification

There is a marked trend in Sandy Springs toward tear downs of smaller homes and building of larger, more expensive dwellings that do not serve the first-time homebuyer market. One possible alternative that has been mentioned by the Comprehensive Plan Citizen Advisory Committee is to designate some of the older, more affordable single-family residential subdivisions as “workforce” housing, and retain them as such. This means, in effect, preventing the “gentrification” of these neighborhoods, or in other words doing something that works against the forces of the free housing market. While any type of regulation that prevented the “tear down” of obsolete housing would not seem to make sense in light of the need to upgrade obsolete housing, one possible effort is to designate workforce neighborhoods that serve first-time homebuyers and workforce housing needs, and limit the square footage of homes to some reasonable maximum size that is compatible with homes in the workforce neighborhood. Rather than specify a minimum house size, as residential zoning districts now do, local housing and land use policies could be established that prevent, in designated workforce neighborhoods, the building of very large homes, which would have purchase prices above and beyond the means of first-time homebuyers and workforce households.

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

The federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is a grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on a formula basis for entitlement communities, and by the state Department of Community Affairs for non-entitlement jurisdictions. This grant allots money to cities and counties for a variety of eligible community development activities. Sandy Springs will implement its own Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program beginning July 1, 2008.

The citizen survey asked a question relative to the upcoming CDBG program. It stated “The comprehensive plan should be specific in terms of what Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds should be used for (e.g., provide infrastructure or be directed at upgrading and expanding the affordable housing stock).” Citizens overwhelmingly agreed with that statement. However, the statement was limited in that it did not offer the wide range of eligible activities that are permitted with CDBG funds from which to choose. With this information not provided, the survey results indicated support for using CDBG funds primarily to increase the number of

dwelling units available for low- and moderate-income residents. However, the City will offer a more complete survey of possible uses for CDBG to gather citizen input as it collects information for the development of the City's 2008-13 Consolidated Plan and Annual Action Plan.

Projection of Households Targeted for CDBG Funds

As a part of the Community Assessment Report (Chapter 3 of the technical appendix), projections of new households by income category were prepared. In fact, two different methods were utilized in projecting the quantities and income characteristics of target households. Those projections are shown here, in Table 3.8 and 3.9, and adopted an expression of the range of target population to be served by the CDBG program (i.e., from 174 to 232 households in the next five years).

Table 3.8
Projection #1 of Households Targeted for Sandy Springs CDBG Program
By Area Median Income (AMI) Category, City of Sandy Springs, 2007-2012

City of Sandy Springs	2007	2010	2011	2012	Net Increase – 2007-2012
Extremely Low Income (30% AMI)	3,242	3,251	3,281	3,286	44
Low Income (50% AMI)	3,034	3,042	3,071	3,075	41
Moderate Income (80% AMI)	6,577	6,595	6,657	6,666	89
All Target Households (0-80% AMI)	12,853	12,888	13,009	13,027	174
Total Households in City	42,434	42,551	42,951	43,007	573

Source: Modified version of Table 3.4, Chapter 3, technical appendix, Community Assessment Report, Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan, February 2007.

Table 3.9
Projection #2 of Households Targeted for Sandy Springs CDBG Program
By Area Median Income (AMI) Category City of Sandy Springs, 2007-2012

AMI Category	% of Total Projected Households	2007 House- holds	2012 House- holds	Net Increase, 2007-2012
Extremely Low Income	1.3%	552	559	7
Low Income	9.8%	4,158	4,215	57
Moderate Income	29.2%	12,390	12,558	168
All Target Households	40.3%	17,100	17,332	232
Total Households	100%	42,434	43,007	573

Source: Table 3.21 in Chapter 3, technical appendix, Community Assessment Report, by Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., February 2007, based on Nelson (2004).⁶

⁶ "Workforce Housing Balance for the Atlanta Regional Commission: A Spatial Distribution Assessment." March 25, 2004, by Arthur C. Nelson, Ph.D., FAICP.

Homelessness

The need to address the problem of homeless has been made clear in prior reports on the Atlanta region, as the passage below indicates.

*"...over the next 10 year period, almost 60,000 shelter beds will be needed based on their calculation of roughly 50,000 individuals who were homeless in 2000. Although there are many resources available in the inner core of the Region, the demand overwhelms those resources. Homeless individuals located in the outer counties are not as obvious but are abundant enough to strain the caregiving agencies now in place. In these counties, there are few beds for general populations, families, women with children, battered women, mentally ill persons who are homeless and those with HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, or other debilitating diseases."*⁷

The citizen survey revealed support for the provision of assistance to the homeless. There were 116 of 170 respondents who agreed with the statement: "The City has a role and should respond to the needs of homeless persons in Sandy Springs."

Existing homeless services in Sandy Springs include the Community Action Center, Inc., (1130 Hightower Trail), Sandy Springs Mission (4577 Roswell Rd.) and Sandy Springs United Methodist Church (86 Mount Vernon Hwy.).

Public Housing

The Fulton County Housing Authority provides public rental housing to eligible individuals and families based on the accepted income definitions. The Fulton County Housing Authority (FCHA) provides Section 8 vouchers to 750 households and has a waiting list of 658 households (Sandy Springs Interim Comprehensive Plan, Housing Element).

Housing Assistance Programs

In addition to public housing by Fulton County, there are a number of housing assistance programs available to residents of Sandy Springs from Fulton County, the State of Georgia, and the Federal Government. Such programs are described in this section.

- **Investment Partnership Program (HOME) Programs.** Annually, Fulton County receives from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approximately \$1.2 million under the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME). The Fulton County Board of Commissioners annually approves its Program Action Plan authorizing the expenditure of these funds by the Fulton County Office of Housing and the Fulton County Community Housing Development Corporation. These funds are utilized in Fulton County, outside of the city limits of Atlanta, including the cities of Alpharetta, College Park, East Point, Fairburn, Hapeville, Mountain Park, Palmetto, Roswell, and Union City. HOME funds are appropriated to various activities according to the distribution of low- and very-low-income persons in Fulton County and the Board of Commissioners policies. The County issues a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

⁷ Atlanta Regional Commission, Regional Development Plan Technical Report, Housing Element, 2004 Update, p. 6-35.), citing the Task Force for the Homeless and its report "Homelessness in Metropolitan Atlanta." As cited in Chapter 3, technical appendix, Community Assessment Report, City of Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan.

once or twice a year for housing development projects. Several of the programs listed below are HOME Programs administered by Fulton County for affordable housing projects on a countywide basis.

- **Housing Rehabilitation.** The Fulton County Housing Rehabilitation Program helps low/moderate income Fulton County residents (outside the city limits of Atlanta) make needed home repairs for the correction of health, safety and code violations. The Program uses three primary methods to finance improvements to the County's housing stock and assist those in need. These are: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Emergency Assistance Grants (EAG) and Low Interest/Deferred Payment Loans, and Deferred Payment Loans (DPL).
- **Single/Multi Family Development.** This program provides up to \$500,000 to developers of affordable single or multi family housing for land acquisition in the form of a low interest loan. The goal is to have quality mixed income communities that provide affordable housing for all income levels whereby a family can accommodate their family's needs without having to relocate to another area or part of the county through the development of new housing stock and the maintenance of the existing housing stock.
- **Home Ownership Assistance Program.** This program provides up to \$10,000 for down payment assistance in the form of a one percent interest rate loan (\$100.00 yearly payment for ten years beginning one year after closing). Ten percent, or \$1,000, of the loan will be forgiven annually. The maximum purchase price of the home is \$150,000. The annual household income must not exceed the limits based upon family size as set by HUD.
- **American Dream Down-payment.** The American Dream Down-payment Initiative (ADDI) of 2003 program funds provide down-payment assistance for first-time, low-income homebuyers. The ADDI program was established to increase the homeownership rate, especially among low-income and minority households in order to revitalize and stabilize communities. This program is designed to assist first-time homebuyers with the biggest obstacles to homeownership – down-payment and closing cost assistance and rehabilitation. The Fulton County Board of Commissioners authorized and approved amendments to the 2003 and 2004 Consolidated Plan's Annual Action Plans to include the ADDI Program.
- **Tenant Based Rental Assistance.** The Tenant-Based Rental Assistance program provides rental assistance to low income residents who receive housing from the Housing Authority of Fulton County. HOME funds are used to subsidize rental payments for a minimum of twelve months for families identified by the Housing Authority.
- **Community Development Housing Organizations (CHDO).** The CHDO Program is designed to provide federal funding to private non-profit housing organizations for the development of affordable housing for the community it serves. A minimum of 15% of HOME Entitlement funds must be set aside for housing development activities to be undertaken by CHDOs. CHDO projects must provide housing to low and moderate-income families as defined by HUD's Income Guidelines. Eligible uses of HOME funds by CHDOs include acquisition and/or rehabilitation of rental housing, new construction of

rental housing, new construction of homebuyer properties, and relocation expenses of any displaced persons.

- **Low Income Housing Tax Credits.** With Low Income Housing Tax Credits, the Internal Revenue Service allows a developer or organization to sell tax credits granted to owners of housing designed for low-income residents to assist in the financing of low to moderate-income multi-family housing. When the developer and/or owner use these tax-credits, the developer/owner is required to have a set-aside of units maintained for affordability. This provides persons with low income a safe and efficient place to live. Applications are submitted by developers to the Office of Housing and are reviewed by staff and the Community Housing Development Corporation of Fulton County for compliance with the County's goals for housing development. Applications are then reviewed by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners.
- **Faith-Based Residential Development.** The Faith-Based Residential Development Program is designed to provide faith-based organizations in Fulton County with the tools, training and resources needed to develop affordable housing for low/moderate and elderly citizens within their community. The Fulton County Office of Housing conducts annual technical assistance workshops that teach faith-based organizations the following: how to create a housing 501 c(3) non-profit for receipt of public/private funding, how to engage in housing and economic development or public services activities without putting the assets of the church at risk; how to apply for bond financing and tax credits; how to complete federal, state, and local applications for funding; how to develop and manage property portfolio; how to identify start-up costs for projects; and how to organize their financing for housing development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

Without much effort, Sandy Springs has received substantial population and employment growth. Its location in the north-central part of the region has bestowed on the city important location advantages that have helped it capture a substantial share of the region's employment growth without concerted policies regarding economic development. The office towers at I-285 and SR 400, known as the "king" and queen," symbolize Sandy Springs and its place within the region's economy.

The types of growth Sandy Springs desires to achieve are expressed in its citywide vision statement: The City desires to focus and concentrate new employment opportunities in areas served by MARTA rail transit and bus routes (i.e., in the transit-oriented regional activity center and along Roswell Road). The City has succeeded in channeling growth into these areas through rezoning decisions that prevent the spread of employment uses into stable residential neighborhoods.

The City also desires to obtain high quality development. In establishing a Design Review Board, which was continued by the City after establishment by Fulton County, efforts are made to improve the quality and function of development in growth areas. Although past design review decisions by the county and City have improved the quality and appearance of development, there is recognition on the part of citizens, business persons, and community leaders that more and better guidance would further improve the quality and appearance of development, and thereby the prospects for economic development and redevelopment.

Redevelopment is Priority #1

The older, suburban-style “strip” commercial development along Roswell Road in Sandy Springs is usually characterized by one-story buildings set back from the highway right-of-way with off-street parking in the front. Development typically is isolated, i.e., not planned in relation to abutting commercial uses nor connected with nearby developments. Intensities are typically less than 15,000 square feet of building space per acre (or a floor-area ratio of less than 0.34). The character of these districts is automobile-dominant, though provisions for accommodating pedestrians are provided in some cases. These areas are served by bus transit (MARTA) but were not developed in a way that caters to transit users, such as internal sidewalks connected to the public street sidewalk system. Many of such developments are proposed by the citywide vision to be redeveloped, through the application of live-work designations along most parts of the Roswell Road corridor.

Redevelopment is the highest priority for purposes of programming Sandy Springs’ economic development resources. In a citizen survey conducted in February 2007, 153 of 156 respondents agreed that “The City’s plan should articulate specific revitalization and redevelopment (and redevelopment financing) strategies for the Roswell Road corridor and the Town Center redevelopment area.” Citizen respondents also overwhelmingly agreed that:

- “The City should establish a sense of place and use place making principles (i.e., designing for gathering and social interaction) in Town Center redevelopment efforts.”
- Concentrating development in areas served by transit should be a key part of the City’s economic development strategies.”
- The City should use its investment in civic buildings (e.g., new city hall) to strategically leverage and enhance private reinvestment in redevelopment areas.

The City desires to engage in “place making” and create a destination-oriented, mixed use Town Center. Sandy Springs has not yet put into place the implementation strategies needed to realize the redevelopment of the Town Center area and the Roswell Road corridor. However, the discussions of policies for this area that have been included in this Community Agenda have begun to shape that vision. A tax allocation district for the Town Center was created by Fulton County prior to Sandy Springs becoming a city; however, the City plans to look at all redevelopment financing options in the pursuit of its vision for the Town Center.

The Livable Communities Coalition conducted a review of various planning documents in Sandy Springs. In its 2006 report, the coalition’s project group questioned the size of the redevelopment area established in the *Central Business District Economic Analysis and Redevelopment Strategy*. Considering that the redevelopment corridor is approximately 4,800 foot long Roswell Road corridor with an average depth of 400 feet, at a floor-area ratio of 2.2, the Coalition noted there would be a future potential of 4.2 million square feet of floor area on approximately 44 acres of land. Coalition partners questioned whether this area was too large, and whether the market could support that much additional building during the planning horizon.

Indeed, Sandy Springs through its future land use plan designations of “living working” mixed use is suggesting virtually the entire Roswell Road corridor is potentially appropriate for mixed-use redevelopment. Since redevelopment of the entire corridor is probably unrealistic during the planning horizon, Sandy Springs is likely to focus its formal redevelopment activities in the designated Town Center redevelopment area, and provide opportunities and perhaps incentives

for lower-intensity mixed-use redevelopment in other designated nodes and portions of the Roswell Road corridor.

Labor Force and Employment Opportunities

As noted in Chapter 4 of the Technical Appendix, the resident labor force in Sandy Springs in 2000 was disproportionately focused in managerial and professional occupations (a majority) and sales and office occupations. The types of jobs that fit Sandy Springs' resident labor force are those most often found in office parks as opposed to blue-collar type jobs found in industrial parks. The jobs available in Sandy Springs are considered highly consistent with the largest needs of the local workforce.

Smaller portions of the labor force in Sandy Springs in 2000 are employed in blue-collar occupations such as construction and production. Sandy Springs has few if any opportunities to expand the range of job types to accommodate new businesses involved in production, manufacturing, and industry, since it has very little industrially zoned land and not much vacant land available and suitable for such development. Furthermore, in response to the survey question, "the City should diversify its economy to include some manufacturing or industrial uses," 108 of 156 respondents disagreed. For these reasons, Sandy Springs does not intend to put in place any policies that would significantly change the current or forecasted employment mix within the City.

Growth Preparedness: Ensuring Infrastructure

Sandy Springs is adequately served with water and sanitary sewer facilities by Fulton County and the City of Atlanta. Those facilities will enable the City to continue and sustain its economic growth. Telecommunications infrastructure is particularly important in Sandy Springs, since a larger share of its employment base is in the area of information when compared with occupational mixes in the state and nation. City leaders should continue to explore ways to ensure employers in the city have the best available communications technology.

As is made evident in the analysis of road capacities in Sandy Springs, traffic congestion places some limitations on future growth potential. Many roads in Sandy Springs exceed their capacity (i.e., levels of service are inadequate), and a transportation master plan has been prepared as a part of this comprehensive plan in order to address transportation needs.

Home Occupations

A majority (88 of 156) of citizen respondents to the City's planning survey agreed with the statement that "the City should emphasize or encourage home occupations (compatible businesses within dwellings) as a part of its economic development strategy." Many noted concerns about the extent to which small home-based businesses might impact protected neighborhoods.

Employment Projections

Table 3.10 provides projections of employment for Fulton County and the City of Sandy Springs from 2007 to 2027. The projections assume that Sandy Springs will maintain a constant share of the county's employment increases. That assumption is considered reasonable in light of the location advantages of Sand Springs within the context of regional growth patterns, even considering that other parts of Fulton County, yet to develop, are projected to gain employment at faster rates of growth during the next twenty years. Table 3.11 shows the future allocation of employment by the city's six creek watersheds.

Table 3.10
Total Employment Projections, 2007-2027
Fulton County and City of Sandy Springs

	2007	2012	Net Change, 2007-2012	2027	Net Change, 2007-2027
Fulton County ARC <i>Envision6+</i>	790,109	838,303	48,194	996,877	206,768
City of Sandy Springs	86,912	92,213	5,301	108,599	21,687

Source: Fulton County projections from Atlanta Regional Commission, Envision 6+ (certain years interpolated). Sandy Springs share of total Fulton County employment (11%) calculated from Census 2000 PHC-T-40, "Estimated Daytime Population and Employment-Residence Ratios: 2000" for Sandy Springs Census Designated Place (CDP) and Fulton County, and is assumed to remain constant.

Table 3.11
Total Employment by Watershed, 2007-2027
City of Sandy Springs

Watershed	2007	2012	Net Change, 2007-2012	2027	Net Change, 2007-2027
Sullivans Creek	12,200	13,000	800	15,400	3,200
Crooked Creek	1,400	1,600	200	2,200	800
Marsh Creek	12,651	14,133	1,482	18,700	6,049
Heards Creek	9,700	10,400	700	12,600	2,900
Long Island Creek	8,961	9,346	385	10,500	1,539
Nancy Creek	42,000	43,734	1,734	49,199	7,199
Total City of Sandy Springs	86,912	92,213	5,301	108,599	21,687

Source: Jerry Weitz & Associates, Inc., March 2007, based on employment projections by traffic analysis zone (TAZ) by Weitz & Associates, September 2006. Note: Base data and 2030 data from the Atlanta Regional Commission were used and modified by TAZ, then converted to watershed geography.

Economic Development Resources

Resources available to Sandy Springs in the arena of economic development include the Fulton County Department of Economic Development, the Development Authority of Fulton County, the Perimeter Community Improvement District, the Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce, and the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce. The Atlanta Regional Workforce Board provides job training and job seeking resources to residents of the region, county, and city.

NATURAL RESOURCES

As articulated in the citywide vision statement, Sandy Springs values its natural resources, especially the Chattahoochee River, its streams, forests and tree canopies in the city. The questionnaire administered by the City as a part of the comprehensive planning process in February 2007 revealed substantial support for:

1. Going beyond statutory minimums in municipal efforts to protect water quality.
2. Strengthening measures to protect forests and trees.
3. Prescribing additional measures for the regulation of development on steep slopes.
4. Identifying and prescribing measures to protect and enhance scenic views and sites.
5. Promoting conservation subdivisions.

A number of environmental protection measures are already in place to protect the natural environment in Sandy Springs. Such measures include various land use regulations, a special review process for development in the Chattahoochee River corridor per the Metropolitan River Protection Act, an updated tree ordinance (February 6, 2007), a floodplain management ordinance, tributary and stream buffer protection ordinance, soil erosion and sedimentation control ordinance, and subdivision and land development regulations which include stormwater management.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Citizen responses to a questionnaire administered during the planning process revealed substantial support for the statement "the City should adopt a local historic preservation ordinance, which would establish a Historic Preservation Commission and establish a process of reviewing building demolitions and additions or new structures for appropriateness with their historic context." The questionnaire results also indicate that respondents were relatively equally divided in terms of (1) whether the City should have its own historic preservation staff; and (2) whether heritage tourism should become a part of the City's overall economic development strategies.

It was determined that the city has few remaining historic resources to justify pursuit of formal historic preservation programs or to integrate heritage tourism into economic development efforts. The short-term work program calls for an update of the city's historic resources survey, which after completion may provide the basis for reevaluating the needs for more formal programs of historic preservation.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Community facilities can be grouped generally into larger areas of concern, summarized in this section.



Public Safety

This general category includes crime, law enforcement (sheriff, police, courts, corrections) fire protection and rescue operations, emergency medical services, 911, emergency management and animal control. Sandy Springs operates its own police and fire departments. Emergency medical services are provided by Rural/Metro. The locations of fire stations and the police headquarters are provided on the map on the preceding page prepared by the City.

Emergency 911 communications for the Police and Fire Departments are handled via intergovernmental agreement. Sandy Springs operates a municipal court, but other courts are operated by Fulton County. The City does not operate its own jail, but it has intergovernmental agreements with the City of Roswell, the City of Doraville, Irwin County, Georgia to house offenders. The Atlanta-Fulton County Emergency Management Agency is responsible for maintaining and implementing the Emergency Operations Plan, which is the legal and organizational basis for coordinated emergency and disaster operations in the City of Atlanta and Fulton County.

Health, Education, and Welfare

This category of community facilities and services includes hospitals, nursing homes, public welfare programs, public and private school systems and institutions of higher learning, libraries, and public cemeteries. Schools are provided by the Fulton County Board of Education and numerous private schools. All colleges and universities in the City are private. Public health, welfare, and social services are provided by Fulton County. The Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness provides various facilities and services including environmental health. Sandy Springs is served by one library located at 395 Mt. Vernon Highway NE. It was constructed in 1989 and consists of 25,000 square feet of space. The library is considered in very good condition. Future improvements or replacement of the facility would be dictated by the Facility Master Plan for the Atlanta-Fulton County Library system. The plan also describes plans for the future expansion of the library. The Fulton County Human Services Department provides services to seniors, children/youth, and disabled persons.

General Administrative Facilities

This category includes administrative offices for city and county personnel, including management, building inspections, economic development and tourism, and business licensing among others. The Sandy Springs Department of Operations includes Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology and Purchasing. That department handles alcohol licenses as well as business licenses and occupational tax certificates. City Hall offices, which include Community Development and Public Works Administration in addition to the Operations Department, are currently located at 7840 Roswell Road, Building 500, Sandy Springs, Georgia, 30350, in the Morgan Falls area.

Utility-type Operations

Utility operations include solid waste collection and disposal, water systems, sewer systems, and stormwater management. Sandy Springs is served by water facilities operated by Fulton County and the City of Atlanta and with sanitary sewer systems and wastewater treatment operated by Fulton County. Solid waste collection and disposal is provided via a private vendor. Sandy Springs is planning to initiate a stormwater utility in the coming years.

Sandy Springs is responsible for its own stormwater management facilities in coordination with Fulton County. More detailed planning for stormwater management is needed in Sandy Springs, since there are major deficiencies in the infrastructure and the system is overloaded. To address stormwater needs, Fulton County initiated the Fulton County Surface Water Management Utility/User Fee Development Project. The intent of that utility/user fee program is to provide Fulton County with stable, adequate and equitable funding in order to address current deficiencies in the stormwater system, enhance services and reduce numerous and severe drainage and water quality problems. The Community Agenda calls for the City of Sandy Springs to initiate its own stormwater utility or coordinate with Fulton County's program.

Recreation and Park Facilities

This category of community facilities includes state and local parks, local recreation programs, and cultural and community assets. Sandy Springs operates its own Recreation and Parks Department and has acquired parks from Fulton County. Fulton County also continues to provide community and senior center facilities and other programs within or serving the residents of Sandy Springs. A Recreation and Park Master Plan has been prepared simultaneously with the development of this Community Agenda (see separate discussion in this chapter). National recreation areas are operated along the Chattahoochee River by the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Services.

Transportation

Sandy Springs is responsible for the local road system through its Department of Public Works. The Georgia Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration are responsible for state and federal routes in the city, including Interstate 285, U.S. Highway 19 (S.R. 400) and Roswell Road (S.R. 9). Long-range transportation planning is provided by the Atlanta Regional Commission in conjunction with other local, regional, and state agencies. Public transportation is provided by the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), with other agencies also having roles in that regard (Georgia Regional Transit Authority) and the more recent Regional Transit Board.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Fulton County Government

Fulton County Government plays the largest role in terms of service delivery in Sandy Springs. As noted in Chapter 7 of the Technical Appendix and this chapter under "Community Facilities and Services," Fulton County Government provides many different facilities and services to the residents, businesses, and institutions of the City of Sandy Springs. Some of these facilities and services are ongoing and would be provided whether Sandy Springs was an incorporated municipality or not (sheriff, courts, health, social services, etc.). Areas of cooperation with the Fulton County Board of Education include dialogue regarding development of the school system's infrastructure improvements, involvement by the Board of Education in reviewing and commenting on land use applications in the City, and intergovernmental agreements regarding the joint, co-, or shared delivery of parks and recreation facilities. The operation of these facilities and services by various Fulton County agencies means that the City will continuously coordinate with Fulton County in terms of planning and delivery.

Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District

This district was established by the Georgia General Assembly in 2001 via Senate Bill 130 to address the pressing need for comprehensive water resources management in metropolitan north Georgia. The main purpose of the district is to promote intergovernmental coordination for all water issues, to facilitate inter-jurisdictional water-related projects, and to enhance access to funding for water-related projects among local governments.

The district's jurisdiction encompasses 16 counties including Fulton. It is required by State law to prepare three long-term plans (which it completed in 2003): a long-term wastewater management plan; a water supply and water conservation management plan, and a district-wide watershed management plan. These regional plans are very important and have a major bearing on the future of how water, sewer, and stormwater management facilities will be provided in Sandy Springs. An update of the plans must occur every five years, and Sandy Springs should participate in this plan update processes.

Service Delivery Strategies

In 1997, the State passed the Service Delivery Strategy Act (HB 489). This law mandates the cooperation of local governments with regard to service delivery issues. Each County was required to initiate development of a service delivery strategy between July 1, 1997, and January 1, 1998. Service delivery strategies must include an identification of services provided by various entities, assignment of responsibility for provision of services and the location of service areas, a description of funding sources, and an identification of contracts, ordinances, and other measures necessary to implement the service delivery strategy. Sandy Springs, as a new municipality, must be included in the Fulton County Service Delivery Strategy.

Changes to service arrangements described in a service delivery strategy require an update of the service delivery strategy and an agreement by all parties. Because of this provision, it is likely that the need for intergovernmental coordination with regard to service delivery strategies will continue into the future. In addition, service delivery strategies must be updated every ten years. The Service Delivery Strategy Act also mandates that land use plans of different local governments be revised to avoid conflicts.

Intergovernmental Agreements

The Technical Appendix provides an inventory of intergovernmental agreements that have been executed by the City of Sandy Springs. It excludes reference to agreements with non-profit organizations.

RECREATION AND PARKS

Master Plan

Sandy Springs prepared a master plan for recreation and parks as a part of the comprehensive planning process. This section on recreation and parks summarizes major features of the master plan. See also policies in Chapter 5 and short-term work program projects in Chapter 6 of this Community Agenda.

Maintenance Requirements

After acquiring parklands from Fulton County, the City faces a number of funding challenges with regard to the ongoing maintenance, and short-term improvement of the city's park facilities. Sandy Springs contracts with a private firm to maintain existing recreation and park sites. There is pressure to fund the necessary maintenance and repair projects at existing parks.

Planning for New Parks and Greenways

In addition to maintaining and improving existing parks and recreation facilities, the City proposes to add new parks, though it is challenged in terms of providing new parks given the scarcity of suitable, undeveloped, available tracts of land. There is a major need to acquire park land in the southern part of the City (south of Interstate 285). Short-term park capital projects include Abernathy Park, initial stages of a new Riverpark at Morgan Falls, acquisition of new park land for future development, and the acquisition of land in fee-simple title or through easements for greenway trails. The City will also spend money on the design of various projects so that it is ready to initiate various improvements when funding becomes available.

Recreation Centers and Community Centers

The master plan calls for the construction of recreation/community centers during the 20-year planning horizon. These facilities are expensive, costing from \$4 to \$6 million to construct, and they have high operating costs.

Sharing with Schools

One strategy for increasing the availability of recreation and park land that has been thoroughly investigated is to partner with Fulton County Schools.

Funding Program Operations, Maintenance and Capital Improvements

In the past, the Sandy Springs Conservancy and Heritage Sandy Springs have raised private funds for recreation, park, and cultural resource facilities. With the acquisition of parks from Fulton County and hiring in 2006 of a Recreation and Parks Department Director, Sandy Springs is poised to begin playing a major role in recreation programming. This implies substantial increases for operating budgets of the Recreation and Parks Department.

The Recreation and Parks Department with consultant assistance has identified a number of maintenance and replacement projects at existing parks, including but not limited to the resurfacing of tennis courts and the replacement of lighting at ballfields. The Department also desires to bring a new City identity to the parks system so that it is perceived as a unified whole or actual system – that objective is proposed to be achieved over time with incremental capital improvements to entrance designs and signage, among other proposals.

As a part of this comprehensive planning process, Sandy Springs has initiated planning for the adoption of an impact fee ordinance. Capital projects, including ongoing maintenance activities, are identified in the short-term work program (See Table 6.3). For those projects that are eligible for funding with impact fees (see Chapter 7, Capital Improvements Element), impact fees paid for by new residential development will provide one source of limited funding for the

Department. The City's capital improvement program and capital budget provides another limited source of funding.

While non-residential development will not be charged impact fees, through redevelopment there will be opportunities to establish pocket parks, pedestrian plazas, and other open and green spaces, as well as promoting connectivity and connections to planned greenways. Through implementation of adopted policies, and through conditions of development approval, Sandy Springs can help ensure that additional parks and recreation facilities and connections to them are provided as new non-residential and mixed use redevelopment occurs.

In order to achieve its goals of maintaining and expanding the City's recreation and park system, Sandy Springs will need to find additional funding sources. Federal and state funding for parks and recreation is available but limited and competitive. It is likely that Sandy Springs will need to consider a general obligation bond referendum to supplement federal and state grants, impact fees, and municipal capital improvement funds, for both maintenance and replacement projects as well as new land acquisition and new park development.

TRANSPORTATION

Master Plan

Sandy Springs prepared a multi-modal transportation system master plan as a part of the comprehensive planning process. The framework for transportation planning is a set of 11 policies (see Chapter 5). Providing greater detail are "guiding principles" which help translate policies into programs. In order to determine which facilities in Sandy Springs are congested, the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC's) region-wide transportation plan and travel demand model was used. Please consult the separate transportation system master plan for more information.

Congestion

Most of the major roads in Sandy Springs currently have a Volume to Capacity (V/C) ratio greater than 1.0, or LOS "F," including GA 400, I-285, Riverside Drive, and many segments of Roswell Road. Very few roads have v/c ratios of less than 0.85 (Level of Service "A" through "D"). In projecting conditions of the major road system in 2030, the City's transportation consultants have noted that congestion will be severe in year 2030, considering existing conditions and "committed projects" alone. Add to that future increases from higher intensities of redevelopment projects, and Sandy Springs faces a nearly intractable congestion problem.

Roadway and Pedestrian System Needs

A number of strategies and activities will be employed to address roadway system needs. These include but are not limited to the following:

1. Safety improvements along roads with high crash rates.
2. Operational improvements of critical intersections along roadways identified as congested in future years.
3. Management of access points along arterial corridors to ensure throughput capacity is preserved.



4. Identification of appropriate parallel routes and connections to reduce local trip loading on the arterial roadway network, especially in the traditional Sandy Springs business core.
5. Focused pedestrian safety improvements along Roswell Road, and the provision of a more connected and accessible pedestrian system.

Transit

There are four MARTA rail stations pertinent to the Sandy Springs Multimodal Transportation Plan: Medical Center, Dunwoody, Sandy Springs, and North Springs. All of these stations are in Sandy Springs, except for Dunwoody, which is in DeKalb County.

Proposed Improvements and Funding

There are a number of projects that are currently being undertaken by Sandy Springs, including intersection improvements at the intersections of Dunwoody Place and Northridge Road with Roswell Road (SR 9), funded mostly by federal and state transportation programs. Sidewalks are planned for River Valley Road and other locations. Other short-term projects are shown in the short-term work program (see Table 6.3). A development impact fee program for roads has been prepared as a part of this Community Agenda (see Chapter 7, Capital Improvements Element).